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President: Mr. MINTY (South Africa)

Later: Mr. KIM Woo-Sik (Republic of Korea)

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The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(50)/INF/8/Rev.1.

¹ GC(50)/21.

Abbreviations used in this record:

ARCAL	Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean
CPPNM	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
MESSAGE	Model of Energy Supply Systems and their General Environmental Impacts
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review Conference	Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
RCA	Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
SESAME	Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East
SIT	sterile insect technique
SQP	small quantities protocol
TCF	Technical Cooperation Fund

8. General debate and Annual Report for 2005 (continued) (GC(50)/4)

1. Mr. MOREJÓN ALMEIDA (Ecuador) congratulated the Agency and Director General on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for 2005.
2. His country had always been committed to non-proliferation, as evidenced by its membership of the world's first densely populated nuclear-weapon-free zone. It had condemned all non-peaceful nuclear programmes and had always actively promoted adherence to international non-proliferation agreements. It was a committed supporter of the Agency and insisted on the need to maintain a balance among the organization's statutory activities.
3. States had not only a national but also a collective responsibility to take measures to prevent accidents involving and malicious use of nuclear material, radioactive sources and nuclear technology. Ecuador had organized and hosted, with Agency support, a pan-American meeting on strengthening implementation of international instruments in the Americas for enhanced nuclear and radiological security in Quito on 3–4 April 2006. The aim of the meeting had been to raise awareness of the need for nuclear and radiological security and to promote regional cooperation. His country welcomed the legal framework that had been established in that area through various international instruments and standards. It had informed the Agency of its decision to implement the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources, as advocated in General Conference resolution GC(48)/RES/10 D.
4. Ecuador was also in favour of an international regime for the safe transport of radioactive material covering liability for damage to human health and the environment, and economic loss. Transparent communication between States was also important prior to the transport of radioactive material, particularly by sea, and steps should be taken to promote mutually beneficial dialogue mechanisms between shipping and coastal states.
5. The Agency was the competent authority to verify Member States' compliance with their NPT safeguards obligations. Ecuador attached importance to the universal application of the safeguards system and considered verification of the peaceful nature of the nuclear programmes of all States to be of the utmost importance. It therefore advocated the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and urged all countries to take the measures required to promote the forum recommended in 2000 in General Conference decision GC(44)/DEC/12.
6. As a member of the Board of Governors, Ecuador had worked actively and constructively on various aspects of strengthening the safeguards system. It had shown its commitment to combating new global threats by supporting the conclusion of the Board of Governors that the SQP was a weakness in the safeguards system. It had also been the first country in its region to modify the standard text. It had hosted a regional seminar on strengthened safeguards, SQPs and additional protocols on 5–6 April 2006.
7. His country upheld the inalienable right of NPT States Party to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and without discrimination, provided they complied fully with their obligations under the Treaty with complete transparency and without delay.
8. Since it attached importance to diplomatic dialogue for resolving international conflict, Ecuador had worked within the Agency's Board of Governors to bring about a negotiated solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. It had called repeatedly on Iran to demonstrate its commitment to peace and

dialogue, to comply with United Nations Security Council resolution 1696 (2006) and to cooperate with the Agency by implementing the measures requested by successive resolutions of the Board of Governors, thus creating an atmosphere of transparency and trust to allay the doubts about its nuclear programme. It had also encouraged those countries involved in the negotiations to continue to exercise patience and perseverance and to expand their diplomacy through open dialogue with a view to finding a comprehensive solution which both satisfied the Iranian people and provided the international community with adequate assurances.

9. Ecuador also hoped for a definitive, comprehensive and peaceful outcome to the negotiations on the DPRK's nuclear programme. It supported the six-party talks which aimed at encouraging the DPRK to abandon its military nuclear programme and return to the NPT and Agency safeguards.

10. While the security of nuclear and radiological material, and safeguards and verification were an important concern, meeting the basic needs of mankind was a prerequisite for security in the wider sense. The Agency's statutory activities made a significant contribution to the fight against poverty and disease, and to health, agriculture, energy, nutrition, environmental protection and water resources management, but more efforts and resources were required. Under the Agency's technical cooperation programme, Ecuador had hosted a workshop on the logical framework for the preparation of projects for the 2007–2008 cycle and a workshop on designing sustainable energy systems using the MESSAGE model. His country was grateful to the Agency for the assistance it had provided under projects which had contributed to its sustainable social development. It hoped to receive significantly more technical assistance in the coming biennium in priority areas.

11. His country had been making great efforts for many years to settle all its arrears both to the technical assistance programme and to the Regular Budget. It also continued to strengthen the activities of the Ecuadorian Atomic Energy Commission which, under the presidency of the National Security Council, was working to harmonize the law on management of radioactive material and ionizing radiation generators with Agency standards, and to strengthen its regulatory capacity in such areas as radiation protection, security, safe transport of material and sources and radioactive waste management. All of those actions bore testimony to Ecuador's support for and commitment to all the Agency's activities.

12. Ms. DREIHANN HOLENIA (Haiti) said that, over the preceding 50 years, the Agency had successfully carried out the tasks entrusted to it not only in the field of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons but also in the area of sustainable development. The Agency was the only international organization with the capacity to intervene effectively in the five priority areas identified by the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, namely water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity. The Agency had a fundamental role to play not only in those areas, but also in taking steps to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

13. Nuclear applications had a crucial role to play in tackling development problems. It was important to keep the international community better informed of the immense possibilities offered by nuclear technology in the field of sustainable development. The benefits of using isotopic and nuclear techniques in fields as diverse as environmental protection, aquifer management and improvement of soil fertility were little known. To correct that situation, the Agency should develop an information policy aimed not only at the general public but also at other international organizations, highlighting the strategic importance of nuclear energy and dispelling the prejudices surrounding nuclear technology.

14. Her Government attached great importance to the Agency's technical cooperation programme in Haiti. Over the preceding four years, cooperation between Haiti and the Agency had expanded in such fields as radiation protection, training of radiotherapy technicians, improvement of soil fertility and

energy planning. In the space of three years, firm bases had been laid to allow for the short- and medium-term implementation of an extensive and solid programme on the use of isotopic and nuclear techniques to promote sustainable development in Haiti. Special attention would be given to human resources training and management in the field of radiotherapy, which would allow the Government to define and apply a nuclear knowledge management policy that could contribute effectively to development. In that connection, the Government, through the Ministry of Public Health and the Dosimetry and Radiation Protection Unit, was putting in place the required radiation protection and nuclear safety infrastructure. It also attached great importance to the project on radiotherapy for the treatment of cancer, which was undoubtedly a public health priority. She appealed to interested States and organizations to help Haiti implement the project, as it would impact positively on the anti-cancer programme planned by the Ministry of Public Health.

15. Technical cooperation among developing countries was assuming increasing importance, particularly South-South cooperation. It complemented admirably the traditional relations between the developed North and the developing South, giving developing countries the opportunity to benefit mutually through shared experience. In Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the most enriching experiences as regards technical cooperation was ARCAL which had been in existence for 22 years. Haiti had adhered to that agreement three years previously and, recognizing its immense value and exemplary character, hoped that the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean could continue to use it to increase technical cooperation among developing countries. Her country urged the Agency to continue to lend its support to that regional instrument in order to allow the least developed countries of Latin America to benefit from the experience acquired by other countries in the region.

16. Haiti had been stressing for some time the need for the Agency Secretariat to pay greater attention to least developed countries in order to allow them to make up ground in terms of nuclear knowledge, and benefit from the peaceful applications of nuclear energy. Haiti understood the Agency's position, which was based on budgetary considerations, that the number of projects per cycle should be limited to five per country, however it did not believe that that rule should apply to least developed countries. In the future, the Secretariat could consider creating a special unit to deal with the specific problems of those countries.

17. Her country condemned any attempt to use nuclear technology for non-peaceful or terrorist purposes. In the light of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), it supported the steps taken by the Agency to prevent and combat nuclear and radiological terrorism and illicit trafficking in nuclear material, which threatened the public and the planet's ecosystem. To contribute to those efforts, Haiti had already ratified its comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol and was about to ratify the CPPNM.

18. In his opening statement, the Director General had said that anniversaries were a time for reflection and renewal. Without the Agency, the world would not be what it was today. The Agency offered nations with different civilizations and ideologies somewhere to discuss not only matters related to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also sustainable development. In the preceding year, the international community had recognized the Agency's work by awarding it the Nobel Peace Prize. The Director General's task was immense and the renewal that he was hoping for could only take place if all parties recognized the opportunities offered by the Agency and its contributions to sustainable development and protection of the environment.

19. Mr. CHONG (Singapore) said that, on the Agency's 50th anniversary, there was every reason to be proud of its achievements. Its tireless efforts in contributing to international peace, security and prosperity through the peaceful application of nuclear technologies had been recognized by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Agency and its Director General.

20. Over the years, the Agency had had to evolve to keep pace with the changing trends in nuclear power, expanding applications of nuclear technology and emerging proliferation concerns in the nuclear field. The challenges had become even more daunting as nuclear power had taken on a greater role in meeting the world's growing energy needs, with the largest growth in the number of nuclear power facilities expected to be in Asia. Efforts had to be made to ensure that nuclear facilities met the highest operational safety requirements, that nuclear security was assured and proliferation concerns fully addressed. Looking ahead, the Agency needed to adapt constantly while remaining focused on strengthening the three main pillars of its activities: nuclear safety, nuclear technology and nuclear verification.

21. Singapore attached great importance to all aspects of nuclear safety. Setting the highest standards in nuclear safety and security remained a fundamental precondition as the demand for nuclear energy grew. The various international legal instruments, conventions, codes of conduct, safety guides and standards served as building blocks for a global nuclear safety regime. His country recognized and supported the Agency's efforts to provide the relevant benchmarks in nuclear safety through various instruments, peer reviews, and assistance and review missions. The Agency's work in the area of nuclear safety provided the framework and impetus for States to cooperate in promoting a strong nuclear safety regime. His country was in favour of greater regional cooperation in the area of nuclear safety and security, which would serve to complement and strengthen the various international and national efforts undertaken. That in turn would contribute to building confidence among States with regard to the use of nuclear power.

22. In the context of the safety of nuclear facilities, the importance of the transboundary emergency preparedness and response capabilities of States could not be overemphasized. Singapore attached great importance to the establishment of such capabilities and commended the Agency on establishing the Incident and Emergency Centre in 2005. The Centre served as a global focal point, but bilateral and regional networks should also be developed through which Member States could share their emergency response plans. Where possible, a regional approach integrating Member States' capabilities could also be explored. He noted with satisfaction that the Asian Nuclear Safety Network had included emergency preparedness and response in its discussions for 2006.

23. As medical techniques using radiation advanced and their scope of use increased, attention to the safety of such applications should also progress. With regard to radiation protection, Singapore continued to host scientific visits and provide fellowship opportunities and training courses on nuclear medicine and radiation protection.

24. The promotion of nuclear safety had to go hand in hand with ensuring nuclear security, as challenges to global security continued to dominate the international agenda. Some terrorists would not hesitate to use nuclear devices and material to carry out their attacks, so States needed to be vigilant in protecting nuclear material and facilities and combat threats through joint action. His country supported efforts to combat terrorism in all forms and at all levels. It welcomed the development of the Safety Fundamentals series, the Agency's Nuclear Security Plan for 2006–2009, and greater use of the Nuclear Security Fund to expand the Agency's activities in that area. It also appreciated the Agency's various measures to enhance States' ability to detect the sources of radiological threats and take the necessary countermeasures.

25. Singapore supported the full and effective implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the stepping up of domestic controls and international cooperation against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It had decided to expand its strategic goods control list to include the full lists of controlled items established by the four multilateral export control regimes: the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Australia Group, and the Missile Technology Control Regime. The expanded list would take effect from January 2008.

26. In defending the right of States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, the Agency also had to ensure that that right was exercised in compliance with States' non-proliferation obligations under Articles I, II and III of the NPT and Agency safeguards, and with the utmost transparency. The safeguards system had to remain able to respond to new challenges in a credible and effective manner and the Agency's verification regime should continue to play a central role in providing the necessary safeguards assurances. Singapore was working to put in place the instruments required to ratify the additional protocol, which it had signed in September 2005, and to modify its SQP in the near future. It advocated the universalization of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols and urged Member States that had yet to undertake such commitments to do so at the earliest opportunity.

27. The DPRK continued to pose a serious challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. His country was deeply concerned that the DPRK had chosen to remain outside the Agency's verification system, thereby depriving the international community of any assurances regarding its nuclear material and activities. He urged the DPRK to return to the NPT, resume cooperation with the Agency, accept full Agency safeguards, and dismantle any nuclear weapons programme in a prompt, transparent and verifiable manner.

28. The Board of Governors continued to address the issue of the implementation of NPT safeguards in Iran. Singapore urged Iran to extend its full cooperation to the Agency and to resolve all outstanding issues by fully implementing the requirements of Board resolutions and United Nations Security Council resolution 1696 (2006). Iran's right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes was not inconsistent with its responsibility to restore international confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. His country remained hopeful that the diplomatic efforts undertaken could lead to a peaceful and sustainable long-term solution to the issue.

29. The proliferation risks of sensitive aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle had gained increased international attention, particularly with the expected expansion of nuclear power. Past efforts to address the issue had not produced concrete results owing to its complex and delicate nature. Nonetheless, it was imperative to find a balanced approach to curbing proliferation while upholding the right of States to pursue the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Several proposals had been made in that regard, including a multilateral approach to the nuclear fuel cycle. Assurance of supply and reliable access to nuclear fuel, including international supply guarantees with Agency participation, were important topics that warranted further consideration. Singapore welcomed the special event being held alongside the General Conference as a basis for further discussion to ensure that the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy was complemented by appropriate measures to address proliferation concerns. The Secretariat could bring ideas from the discussions to the Board for further consideration.

30. Singapore encouraged the Agency to enhance further its activities aimed at bringing socio-economic benefits to developing countries. The Agency's work on facilitating international cooperation in the successful application of nuclear technology could have a meaningful impact on the socio-economic growth of developing countries and contribute to achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The application of nuclear technology had already helped bring many socio-economic benefits to developing countries through a range of nuclear applications in the areas of human health, industrial applications, animal production and health, food quality and safety, and water resources management. His country remained fully committed to supporting the Agency's activities relating to nuclear science and technology.

31. The Agency's technical cooperation programme had expanded considerably in recent years, both in terms of scope and the number of activities. The Agency was to be commended for establishing partnerships with international and regional development organizations to build greater synergies. Singapore remained firmly committed to supporting the technical cooperation programme

and looked forward to continued cooperation with the Department of Technical Cooperation, through its Memorandum of Understanding, in outreach efforts to other Member States. It also looked forward to bilateral cooperation with the Agency in the next cycle. It continued to support regional activities undertaken under the RCA.

32. A comprehensive and effective technical cooperation programme clearly required adequate, reliable and sustainable funding. Singapore was committed to paying its TCF contributions in full and in a timely manner and would be pledging its cash surplus from the 2004 Regular Budget to fund the shortfall in PACT, a vital humanitarian outreach programme. It had also pledged its full share of the TCF for 2006.

33. Mr. COGAN (Ireland) congratulated the Director General and the Agency on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which had been a due recognition of their vital role in safeguarding and promoting international peace and security.

34. A multilateral approach was the most effective way of ensuring international peace and security. The multilateral regime of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements was especially important for a small country like Ireland, as it formed the basis of a rules-based international order that underpinned and sustained collective efforts, providing the best guarantee for the future. Ireland remained committed to implementing and strengthening those international instruments, and to the universalization of the norms contained therein. However, the goal of universalization was in itself insufficient without support for effective compliance with those instruments and for the implementation of their provisions. Failure to abide by the obligations set out in multilateral instruments not only weakened and undermined them, it also posed a threat to the global system of peace and security as a whole.

35. His country had long held the view that the NPT was the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. It had a particular affinity with the Treaty, since it was an initiative taken in 1958 by the then Irish Foreign Minister, Mr. Frank Aiken, that had culminated in the negotiation of the NPT.

36. Disarmament and non-proliferation were mutually reinforcing processes which required constant and irreversible progress on both fronts. Ireland attached particular importance to the conclusions contained in the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference which set out 13 practical steps for systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article IV of the Treaty, including an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. A consensus agreement of that kind imposed particular responsibilities and retained a particular legitimacy.

37. Ireland had been deeply disappointed at the outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, which had been a missed opportunity for the international community to work together to tackle key threats to global peace and security and to agree on an effective, collective response. As preparation began for a new NPT review cycle, efforts should be redoubled to find common ground which would allow for an effective response to the challenges faced. Strengthening the NPT to ensure respect for all its provisions had long been his country's priority in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and it would spare no effort in working to ensure a successful outcome to the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

38. The Agency played a vital role in ensuring that multilateral rules were enforced. The world had changed over the preceding 50 years and it faced additional challenges and new proliferation threats to which the Agency had to respond accordingly. The Model Additional Protocol reinforced the NPT and had become an essential part of an effective safeguards regime. Indeed, the additional protocol and comprehensive safeguards agreement should be considered the verification standard.

39. The CTBT was another multilateral mechanism that would contribute to international peace and security and he called on those States that had yet to ratify it to do so, thus facilitating its early entry into force. The recent momentum in the Conference on Disarmament with regard to negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty were encouraging.

40. Ireland was disappointed by Iran's failure to act in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1696 (2006). It was also seriously concerned that the most recent report by the Director General found that Iran had failed to suspend its enrichment activities and indicated that the Agency was still not in a position to verify that Iran's nuclear programme was for exclusively peaceful purposes. He urged Iran to comply fully with its international non-proliferation obligations, to suspend its enrichment activities immediately and to cooperate with the Agency in an open and transparent manner.

41. Likewise, he called on the DPRK to return to full compliance with its international non-proliferation obligations under the NPT, including its safeguards agreement with the Agency. Ireland fully supported the six-party talks process and called on the DPRK to resume talks immediately, since they offered the best prospect for reaching a peaceful negotiated outcome.

42. His country's nuclear energy policy was clear and unambiguous: it had chosen not to exercise its right to use nuclear energy for electricity generation. That policy was shaped by the belief that nuclear energy and its associated activities posed an unacceptable risk to human health and the environment. Ireland did not believe that nuclear energy could constitute a sustainable or acceptable energy resource, since many serious problems remained unresolved, including the safety and security of nuclear installations, transport of nuclear material, radioactive waste management, reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, contamination of the marine and terrestrial environment and the risk of accidents or proliferation. The recent renaissance of nuclear power was based on the belief that nuclear energy could help solve the problem of global warming. His country did not share that belief and thought that the perceived benefits of nuclear energy were outweighed by the serious risks it posed to human health, public safety and the environment.

43. Although Ireland had chosen not to develop nuclear power, it derived considerable benefit from its membership of the Agency. It valued the Agency's pioneering work and high-quality research in such areas as agriculture, food and human health, as well as the opportunity to participate in the Agency's work at the General Conference, the Board of Governors and other conferences and meetings. The Agency provided the necessary framework for cooperative efforts to build and strengthen the international nuclear safety and security regime. That framework included advisory international standards, codes and guides, binding international conventions, international peer reviews and an international system of emergency preparedness and response. The Agency's vital role in implementing such measures was, in many cases, complemented by bilateral agreements between States.

44. The aims of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency were to provide mechanisms for mitigating the consequences of an accident through exchange of information and provision of assistance among States Parties. The Agency's role was to facilitate and support cooperation among States Parties. General Conference resolution GC(46)/RES/9 D encouraged Member States to contribute to international efforts to develop a coherent and sustainable joint programme for more efficient international response to nuclear emergencies.

45. In 2003, at a meeting of competent authorities convened by the Secretariat, it had been agreed that a National Competent Authorities' Co-ordinating Group would be established which would develop an International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response

System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies. It was vital that work in that area be properly funded and, in that connection, Ireland was preparing to make an extrabudgetary contribution of US \$30 000 to assist with the implementation of the action plan.

46. Ireland shared a common marine environment through which shipments of nuclear material were made. Given the risks involved and public concern, coastal States such as Ireland should be fully informed when such shipments passed near their coasts. Provision of full information was necessary to allow risk assessment to be carried out and appropriate emergency response measures to be put in place. With the Agency's involvement, attempts were being made to strengthen and expand the ongoing dialogue between coastal and shipping States with a view to improving communication between governments on the marine transport of nuclear material.

47. His country welcomed the special event on the nuclear fuel cycle which was being held alongside the General Conference and looked forward to detailed discussions and exchanges of views. The event was particularly timely and a useful contribution to the consideration of issues relating to a potential new framework that would facilitate safety, security and proliferation resistance in the future use of nuclear energy, for those countries wishing to pursue that option.

48. Although Ireland was not among those countries, it did have significant stakeholder interest in the matters under discussion. It considered nuclear reprocessing to be unsustainable. The cost of reprocessing spent fuel was significantly higher than the cost of direct disposal and was likely to remain so for decades, unless the price of natural uranium leapt to an extraordinary level. There were also substantial environmental concerns about reprocessing, since safety standards were not always met. It was neither acceptable nor sustainable to use a shared marine environment as a ready receptacle for radioactive discharges from reprocessing operations. While it was the sovereign right of individual States to choose the reprocessing option, such practical concerns had to be addressed as a necessary precondition for the operation of existing or future reprocessing facilities. Those concerns were not founded on an abstract ideological policy or political views, but were based on a negative perception of reprocessing experiences in neighbouring States.

49. Ireland supported the Nuclear Security Plan for 2006–2009 and called upon States to contribute to the Nuclear Security Fund. Since its inception, Ireland had made voluntary contributions to the Fund totalling approximately €184 000. It might be appropriate to consider how some Nuclear Security Plan activities could be funded from the Regular Budget.

50. The TCF made a particularly important contribution to upgrading safety in beneficiary States. Although his country did not share the views of some States regarding the use of nuclear energy for electricity generation, it fully supported the Agency's technical cooperation activities in the broad area of non-power applications of nuclear technology. Ireland had paid its full share of the TCF for 2005 and 2006 and would continue to pay a similar share in the future.

51. In celebrating the Agency's achievements over the preceding 50 years, Ireland was confident that the high degree of professionalism and integrity that had characterized the organization's work during that time would continue to help make the world a better and safer place in the years ahead.

Mr. Kim Woo-Sik (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

52. Mr. MUSUMBA (Uganda) congratulated the Director General and the Agency on being awarded the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize, which was a clear indication of the international community's appreciation at a time when the nuclear issue was provoking much debate. He also thanked the Austrian Government for its kind hospitality in hosting the Agency over the 50 years of its existence.

53. The Agency's aims, as laid down by the United Nations General Assembly, were to encourage and assist in the research and development and practical application of atomic energy for peaceful

purposes throughout the world. When President Eisenhower had first proposed an international atomic agency in 1953, he had spoken of an 'Atoms for Peace' project that would help avert an atomic military build-up while ensuring that the greatest of destructive forces could be developed into a boon for the benefit of all mankind. He had also noted that the purpose of the United States was to help mankind move out of the dark chamber of horrors into the light, to find a way by which the minds of men, the hopes of men and the souls of men everywhere could move forward towards peace, happiness and well-being. Over the preceding five decades, the Agency had withstood many storms but it still stood true to the aspirations the world had had for it when it was founded. As a result, atomic energy, that most destructive force, now provided electricity to a large proportion of mankind, prolonged human life through medical applications, and helped feed populations through technological advances in agriculture.

54. As the Agency commemorated its 50th anniversary, there was a need to reflect on the dichotomy that existed in the world regarding nuclear energy. Developed countries had taken substantial advantage of the benefits offered by nuclear energy, but developing countries could not benefit from those advantages owing to a lack of capacity. Indeed, in the nuclear arena, developing countries only seemed to feature when discussions turned to the non-proliferation of nuclear material and the strict enforcement of nuclear safeguards. As the Agency debated a new framework for the utilization of nuclear energy, it should be remembered that a large part of the world did not have access to it. The Agency needed a more aggressive programme to assist Member States to make use of that resource. Most developing countries were facing an acute shortage of energy and nuclear energy could provide the most sustainable source of energy for them.

55. Uganda had been a member of the Agency for 39 years. It was also party to the NPT and the CTBT and had fulfilled all its obligations under international law with regard to the use of nuclear material.

56. The Government of Uganda was grateful to the Agency for the technical assistance the country received with the application of nuclear energy in medicine, agriculture and water resources development. It hoped that that assistance would continue to grow to include training and capacity building in nuclear energy. Uganda was increasing the profile of nuclear science in its national educational system and was working intensively on its nuclear energy-related legal and regulatory frameworks in order to gain full benefit from its membership of the Agency.

57. Fifty years was a long time in the life span of an international organization with a mandate to oversee an issue as critical to international peace and security as nuclear energy. Uganda extended its hearty congratulations to the Agency and the Secretariat for a job well done and looked forward to fruitful years in the future when the benefits of nuclear energy would become more universal.

58. Mr. KODAH (Jordan) congratulated the Agency on its golden jubilee and on being awarded the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize together with its Director General.

59. Jordan greatly appreciated the Agency's achievements in promoting the use of nuclear science and technology in fields such as disease diagnosis and therapy, control of vector-borne diseases, pest control using the SIT, and research on water resources, the environment and industry; as well as its achievements in training human resources, developing radiation protection infrastructure, ensuring the safety and security of radioactive sources, and undertaking verification activities in Member States.

60. Most countries, especially those lacking oil and gas, were currently experiencing a crisis as they sought to secure a supply of energy to meet growing demand at a time of rising prices. The crisis was exacerbated by a shortage of water resources in countries located in arid or semi-arid regions, such as Jordan. He called on the Agency to redouble its efforts to assist Member States in using nuclear energy for electricity generation and seawater desalination. Jordan had requested help with implementing a

project involving a study of the economic and technical feasibility of using nuclear energy for electricity production and seawater desalination. It hoped for continued support on completion of the study to develop the requisite national capabilities.

61. In addition to obtaining Agency support for national technical cooperation projects, Jordan had participated in regional and interregional projects, especially in the areas of agriculture, medicine, radiation protection and monitoring, and training of staff. It hoped for continued support for such important projects as the SESAME project, under which Jordan was currently training human resources in accelerator physics. His country was also cooperating with the Agency on a project to establish a national radiation protection training centre and was willing to expand the centre in due course so that it served all countries in the region.

62. Jordan attached great importance to radiation monitoring, the safety and security of radioactive sources and nuclear material, radioactive waste management and the safe transport of radioactive sources, and the use of radiation monitoring equipment in border areas in order to prevent any form of illicit trafficking. The Jordanian Atomic Energy Commission had drafted national legislation, regulations and instructions on the safety and security of radioactive sources based on the Agency's recommendations and had compiled national records of radioactive sources. Jordan also supported the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources.

63. The Agency's comprehensive safeguards system was the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, which enjoyed the support of most countries in the world. Jordan had stated its position on weapons of mass destruction on many occasions, viewing them as a threat to international peace and security, and it had consistently supported the establishment of zones free of weapons of mass destruction. It had acceded to the NPT and signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol with the Agency, thereby fulfilling all its obligations. He commended countries that had signed additional protocols and urged countries that had not yet done so to take the necessary steps as soon as possible. In particular, his Government called on Israel to accede to the NPT and to implement all its provisions.

64. Mr. ELWAZER (Palestine) said that the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Agency and its Director General showed that the world fully appreciated their fine work in support of peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the benefit of mankind, and against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. He also welcomed the use of the Agency's prize money to set up the IAEA Nobel Cancer and Nutrition Fund.

65. Palestine supported the Arab States' categorical rejection of the presence of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in any State in the Middle East region because of the threat they posed to regional and international peace and security and the environment. All the Arab States were party to the NPT and complied with its provisions, placing their nuclear facilities under comprehensive Agency safeguards. Palestine also supported the NPT as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and stressed that there could be no security or stability in the region unless Israel acceded to the Treaty and placed all its nuclear installations under Agency safeguards. He urged the international community to take steps to make the NPT universal and to ensure the effective implementation of its three key components: nuclear disarmament, the right of States to acquire and develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Palestine also supported the Arab position that the best way of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East was to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. Adopting a selective approach to the issue at the level of individual States was inconsistent with international non-proliferation policies.

66. Palestine attached great importance to cooperation with the Agency and the President of the Palestinian Authority had discussed matters of common interest with the Director General, in

particular strengthening of technical cooperation, during a visit to Austria in March 2006. The Palestinian Authority had established a Nuclear Energy and Radiation Protection Department within its Energy and Natural Resources Authority to cooperate with the Agency on setting up radiation protection infrastructure, on medical and agricultural applications and on personal monitoring of staff exposed to radioactive material. Palestine had two radiotherapy centres, one in the West Bank and one in Gaza, at least 200 public- and private-sector radiodiagnostic centres and five centres for diagnostic nuclear medicine.

67. The situation in Palestine made it difficult to implement projects supported by the Agency, particularly expert visits, delivery of materials and equipment, and travel to attend training courses, because of the restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities which prevented people from obtaining visas to travel outside Palestine. Experts from the Energy and Natural Resources Authority had been unable to attend the General Conference because of the closure of the Rafah border crossing to Egypt.

68. Notwithstanding those difficulties, progress had been made in implementing a number of projects. Technical assistance during the 2005–2006 cycle had focused on the application of radioactive isotopes in agriculture through a fruit fly eradication programme using the SIT, development of radiation protection infrastructure, and enhancement of radiation technology skills. During the 2007–2008 cycle, technical assistance was planned in the following areas: training of staff in environmental radiation monitoring, continued enhancement of radiation technology capabilities, and further enhancement of scientific and technological expertise. Unfortunately, Palestine had been unable to organize any workshops or other activities owing to a lack of equipment and materials and the difficulties faced by experts wishing to travel to Palestine because of the deteriorating security situation.

69. Although Palestine was a non-nuclear-weapon State implementing a simple peaceful nuclear programme, it felt that it lay within a nuclear-weapon State because most of its territory was within a very short distance of Israel's Dimona reactor. Any accident resulting in the leakage of radioactive material would threaten the entire region, polluting the environment, water resources and farms. Recently a number of Palestinian and Israeli environmental protection associations had alleged that Israel was burying radioactive waste in adjacent parts of the West Bank. It was essential to investigate such reports with the assistance of the Agency. The League of Arab States had already taken up the matter at ministerial level. Palestine hoped to protect itself from any accidents in Israel by building up an effective radiation emergency system. Israel had distributed a stable iodine compound to some Israeli communities but not others, since it was feared that radiation accidents might lead to release of radioactive iodine. The danger was now greater than ever before because of the continuous tremors in the region over the preceding year. A major earthquake could prove disastrous because the Israeli reactor was over 50 years old, and the impact of any accident might be felt not only in Palestine but also in neighbouring countries.

70. His country was deeply grateful to the Agency for its support for Palestinian projects under difficult circumstances, and it hoped that that support would continue so that the Energy and Natural Resources Authority could obtain the materials it needed for its work and implement its programmes in spite of the blockade imposed by the Israeli authorities.

71. The Palestinian people continued to dream of establishing their own independent State with its capital in Jerusalem, in spite of their sufferings. Thousands of Palestinians, particularly children, had been killed and wounded, homes and public facilities had been deliberately destroyed and the Palestinian people cut off from the outside world. Israel was dividing up and isolating Palestinian regions, towns and villages, preventing tens of thousands of workers from reaching their places of work in Israel or in Palestinian towns. Imports and exports were subject to stringent restrictions and Israel was withholding tax revenues from the Palestinian Authority. As a result of the financial

sanctions imposed on the Government and people, 65% of the population were now living below the poverty line. He therefore called on the international community to take steps to end the embargo on the Palestinian people and their democratically elected Government, especially in the light of current efforts to form a Government of national unity.

72. Each year the Israeli forces used new kinds of internationally prohibited lethal weapons against the Palestinians. The Palestinian Minister of Health had recently reported that medical teams and the staff of hospitals and operating theatres had come across new types of injuries and that X-rays had revealed fragments of unknown explosive materials in the bodies of dead and wounded Palestinians. In some cases, the remains of victims were charred and lacerated beyond recognition. It was suspected that the Israeli occupying forces were using new kinds of radioactive weapons and he requested the Agency's assistance in looking into the matter.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.